

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method for managing tax information for a product, the method comprising:
receiving a first item;
affixing a memory device to the first item;
storing a data file in the memory device, wherein the data file includes a product
identifier;
processing the first item to form a second item, wherein value is added in the formation
of the second item;
updating the data file in the memory device with information indicative of the value
added to form the second item; and
using the data file to determine a total value added tax for the second item.
2. The method of claim 1, wherein said using the data file comprises:
transmitting the data file to a database; and
calculating a total value added tax for the second product by applying mathematical
formulas to the database.
3. The method of claim 1, wherein the information indicative of the value added is an
amount of value added tax applicable to the value added to from the second item.
4. The method of claim 1, further comprising automatically transmitting the data file to
a tax authority server.
5. The method of claim 1, wherein said processing comprises one or more of the
following: refining, machining, assembling, chemically reacting, and welding.
6. The method of claim 1, wherein the data file also includes a product identifier.
7. The method of claim 1, wherein the data file also includes an indicator of an
applicable value added tax rate.

8. The method of claim 1, wherein the data file also includes one or more of the following: quality control information, production date information, and expiration date information.
9. The method of claim 1, wherein said updating the data file comprises summing a current value added amount with any previously value added amounts to generate a total value added amount for the second item.
10. The method of claim 1, wherein said updating the data file comprises adding data indicative of said processing.
11. The method of claim 1, wherein said memory device is configured with a wireless interface and a power supply.
12. The method of claim 1, wherein said power supply is a solar cell or battery.
13. The method of claim 1, wherein said memory device is a flash memory device.
14. The method of claim 1, wherein said updating comprises:
reading a product identifier from the data file in the memory device;
accessing a database of value amounts;
selecting an amount of value added based on the product identifier and said processing;
summing the amount with any previous value added amounts in the data file in the
memory; and
storing the sum in the memory device.
15. The method of claim 1, wherein said updating is performed automatically using computers and wireless communications links.
16. A method for tracking value added tax, the method comprising:

receiving a first item, wherein the first item has a memory device affixed to it, wherein the memory device stores value added tax information corresponding to the first item; processing the first item to form a second item; updating the value added tax information stored in the memory device to reflect an amount of value added to form the second item; and using the value added tax information stored in the memory device to determine a final amount of value added tax applicable to the second item.

17. The method of claim 16, wherein the value added tax information includes value amounts for each process step performed on the item, and wherein said using comprises applying a value added tax table to the value amounts.

18. A method for tracking value added tax, the method comprising:
receiving an item;
placing the item in a container, wherein the container has a memory device;
storing information about the item into the memory device;
processing the item;
storing information indicative of the processing performed on the item into the memory device;
repeating said processing and said storing information indicative of the processing one or more times;
reading the stored information from the memory device; and
using the information read from the memory device to determine pricing information for the item.

19. The method of claim 18, wherein the pricing information includes value added tax information.

20. The method of claim 18, wherein the information indicative of the processing performed on the item includes an amount indicative of the value added to the item as a result of the processing.

21. The method of claim 18, wherein said storing information about the item, said storing information indicative of the processing, and said reading the stored information are performed by a hand-held wireless communications device.
22. The method of claim 18, wherein said storing information about the item, said storing information indicative of the processing, and said reading the stored information are performed by a plurality of wireless communications devices positioned throughout a manufacturing or assembly line.
23. The method of claim 22, wherein the plurality of wireless communications devices are configured to communicate with a central computer configured to manage the wireless communications devices and to transmit data to and from the wireless communications devices.
24. The method of claim 18, wherein the memory device is a flash memory.
25. The method of claim 18, wherein the memory device includes a power supply and a wireless communications interface.
26. The method of claim 18, further comprising transmitting an item identifier and the information indicative of the processing from the memory device over a network to a data file in a database and updating the data file in the database.
27. The method of claim 18, wherein the item identifier and the information indicative of the processing are encrypted during said transmitting.
28. The method of claim 18, wherein the network comprises one or more of the following: a local area network (LAN) and a wide area network (WAN).

29. An electronic medium storing a computer software program for tracking value added tax for an item, wherein the program is configured to:

assign an item identifier to the item;

store the item identifier to a memory device affixed to the item;

receive input identifying the progress of the item through a production or manufacturing process;

determine a value added to the item in the production or manufacturing process; and

store information indicative of the value added to the item into the memory device.

30. The electronic medium of claim 29, wherein the production or manufacturing process comprises multiple stages, wherein the program is configured to receive input, determine the value added, and store information indicative of the value added for each of the multiple stages.

31. The electronic medium of claim 29, wherein the program is configured to receive input, determine the value added, and store information indicative of the value added in real time.

32. The electronic medium of claim 29, wherein the program is configured to:
read the information from the memory device; and
calculate a value added tax based on the information.

33. The electronic medium of claim 29, wherein the program is configured to:
output the value added tax in a user-specified currency.

34. The electronic medium of claim 29, wherein the program is configured to:
receive input identifying manufacturing or production information for the item; and
store the information into the memory device.

35. An apparatus for storing value added tax data for an item, comprising:
a memory device;

a microprocessor;
an interface coupled to the memory device and the microprocessor, wherein the interface is configured to allow reading and writing of data to the memory device; and
a power supply coupled to the memory device, the microprocessor, and the interface, wherein the memory device is configured to be attached to the item.

36. The apparatus of claim 35, further comprising a container to which the memory device is affixed, wherein the container is configured to hold the item through a production or manufacturing process.

37. The apparatus of claim 35, wherein the interface is a wireless interface.

38. The apparatus of claim 35, wherein the microprocessor is configured to periodically transmit and receive information using the interface.

39. A method for tracking value added tax for a product, the method comprising:
designating a memory device to identify a product being manufactured, wherein the memory device stores data describing the product and wherein the memory device follows the product being manufactured throughout the manufacturing process;
storing first data describing a first product in the memory device;
adding value to the first product to manufacture a second product;
storing second data describing the second product in the memory device;
calculating the value added tax for the second product using the first data and the second data.

40. A method for determining a product value for a product, the method comprising:
designating a memory device to identify a product being manufactured, wherein the memory device stores data describing the product and wherein the memory device follows the product being manufactured throughout the manufacturing process;
storing first data describing a first product in the memory device;
adding value to the first product to manufacture a second product;

storing second data describing the second product in the memory device;
calculating the product value for the second product using the first data and the second data.

41. A system for tracking product value for a product, the system comprising:
a memory device enabled to store and output data;
a microprocessor coupled to the memory device, wherein the microprocessor is configured to read and write data to the memory device; and
a computer program executable by the microprocessor to:
designate the memory device to identify the product being manufactured, wherein the memory device comprises data describing the product and wherein the memory device follows the product being manufactured throughout the manufacturing process;
store first data describing a first product in the memory device;
store second data describing the second product in the memory device in response to value being added to the first product to manufacture a second product;
calculate the product value for the second product using the first data and the second data.
42. A carrier medium that stores program instructions, wherein the program instructions are computer-executable to implement:
designating a memory device to identify a product being manufactured, wherein the memory device comprises data describing the product and wherein the memory device follows the product being manufactured throughout the manufacturing process;
storing a first data describing a first product in the memory device;
storing a second data describing the second product in the memory device in response to value being added to the first product to manufacture a second product;
calculating the product value for the second product using the first data and the second data.